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The INTRODUCTION, *or Design of this Paper:*

WHOEVER sets up for a REFORMER of public Abuses, must expect to encounter innumerable Difficulties. It seems to carry with it an Air of Superiority, to which Mankind submit with the greatest Reluctance. The Office of giving Advice, is naturally obnoxious to Ill-Will, as it implies either some Fault, or a less Degree of Understanding, in the Person who is to take it; for which Reason it is seldom taken. Nor is any Thing more difficult than to eradicate popular Prejudice. Errors, like Families, demand Respect on Account of their Antiquity. Opinions long entertained, and embraced by the Majority, plead both Prescription and Precedent, for their Continuance. The most ridiculous Notions are rendered venerable by Time, and acquire a Kind of Sanction by being diffused thro' Numbers: Nay, it is looked upon as disrespectful, to controvert the Sentiments of our Ancestors, or to oppose an ancient and prevailing Opinion. But such Over-Nicety and Excess of Complaisance, is the Source of innumerable Mischiefs, by tending to the Perpetuation, and (if I may be allowed the Expression) the Immortality of Error.

SOME Persons owe their Prosperity to the Violation of their Trust; and to the Concealment of such Violation from the Public Eye. The Interrupting those in their iniquitous Obscurity, by dragging them into open Day-light, is much-what as agreeable as letting in the Light of the Sun upon a Nest of Owls, to whom it is painful and offensive.

THE Ignorance of others is their distinguishing Characteristic: From whence spring Pride and Self-Conceit; which germinate and flourish with peculiar Vigour in a Soil so congenial to their Natures. Light poured in upon such Minds, is always disgustful: It is like holding a Candle to a Lady celebrated for the Opposite of Beauty: They hate it, because it discovers their Imperfections, mortifies their Pride, and exposes them to the Contempt of the World.

OTHERS there are of a ſupine and ſlothful Temper: Theſe in Society, are like Drones in a Hive. Does their Country flouriſh; they partake of the Fruit of its Proſperity: But Indolence ſo enervates their Powers, that they will neither beſtir themſelves to promote its Intereſts; nor make a Stand when Oppreſſion, like Poverty, *invades as an armed Man*. They wiſh it well, and a Wiſh is the boldeſt Exertion of their Activity: They ſwim with the Current; believe as others, and act, if at all, with the prevailing Majority. As ſuch Men are never for Redreſs; ſo thoſe who labour to effect it, are, in their Opinion, Enemies to the publick Tranquility and Repoſe.

BUT whether their Oppoſition ſprings from Corruption, Ignorance, or Indolence; or however different their Motive, they generally agree in giving an invidious Turn to the Deſign of the Writer. If he diſcants with Spirit, on the Rights of the Subject; he is an Enemy to Monarchy, and a latent Promoter of republican Principles. Does he inſiſt on the due Extent of Prerogative; he is a Tool to the Adminiſtration, and an Advocate for lawleſs Dominion. If he combats the Libertiniſm of the Age; he is an enthuſiaſtic Zealot, or a knaviſh Impoſtor. Does he plead for the free Exerciſe of Conſcience, and diſclaim the Unreaſonableneſs of Perſecution; he is diſſafected to the Church, and a Foe to Religion.

NONE of theſe Diſcouragements ſhall, however, deter me from vindicating the *civil and religious RIGHTS* of my Fellow-Creatures: From expoſing the peculiar Deformity of publick *Vice*, and *Corruption*; and diſplaying the amiable Charms of *Liberty*, with the deteſtable Nature of *Slavery* and *Oppreſſion*. --- I have the Magnanimity to attack the Enemies of human Race, in whatever dignified Shape they appear, and to burſt the Chains they caſt over their Species: To aſſert the native inherent Rights of Mankind: To ſtigmatize the public Robber; and inculcate that Devotion to the Public, from whence ſo many ROMAN Names, immortaliz'd in Story, drew their Luſtre. I ſhall proſecute my Undertaking, with a firm Aſſurance, that it is not Quality, but Innocence, that ought to exempt Men from Reproof: And that Vice and Folly ought to be attacked where-ever they are met with; and eſpecially when placed in high and conſpicuous Stations. In a Word, I ſhall dare to attempt the Reforming the *Abuſes of my Country*, and to point out whatever may tend to its Proſperity and Emolument. Nor will, 'tis to be hoped, a Deſign ſo generous and humane, tho' not executed with that Skill and Dexterity wherewith it might be carried on by an abler Genius, prove altogether unacceptable to the Public: Nay, I flatter my ſelf, that whoever may be diſpleaſed with me, I ſhall be approved by all whoſe Praiſes do Honour to the Perſon on whom they are beſtowed: And if I have the Happineſs to obtain *their* Approbation, I ſhall not trouble my ſelf about the Sentiments of thoſe whoſe Cenſure is Applauſe, and their Commendation diſhonourable: From my own Countrymen eſpecially, to whoſe more immediate Service a conſiderable Number of theſe *Weekly* Speculations will be dedicated, it will be leſs Preſumption to expect a ſuitable Encouragement.

THE Author being under no Attachment to any Party, thinks himſelf the better qualified to make impartial Remarks on the Conduct of every Party, ſo far as it proves injurious to the Public, and farther he is determined not to interfere with the political Controverſies of his Country.

THE Eſpouſing any polemic Debate between different Sects of Chriſtians, ſhall be the laſt Charge againſt him; tho' he ſhall be ever ready to deliver his Sentiments on the Abuſes and Encroachments of any, with the Freedom and Unconcernedneſs becoming Truth and Independency.

THE Imputation of Indecency, and the Uſe of rude and virulent Expreſſions, he will take particular Care not to deſerve: Nor ſhall perſonal Reflections ever blemiſh his Writings. But Corruption in Office ſhall be boldly reprehended; and if it cannot be expoſed without pointing out the Perſon, he ſhall hold himſelf inculpable: For there, not the *Man*, but the *Officer*, is attacked; and public Villainy ought to be rendered publickly infamous, whatever private Detriment it may occaſion to the corrupt Individual.

WHEN I proteſt againſt Ill-Manners and ſcurrilous Language, I mean not to debar my ſelf the Privilege of laſhing Guilt and Corruption in the ſtrongeſt Terms. It would not, for Inſtance, be Slander or Virulence, to call a *Chartres*, or a *Wild*, Rogue and Robber. On the contrary, tho' theſe Appellatives might not be within the Intent of the Statute, that requires the Deſcription of Perſons by their proper Additions; yet would they be within the original Deſign of Names, which Antiquarians tell us, were either agreeable to Men's Perſons, or deſcriptive of their natural or moral Qualities.

NEITHER Hope nor Fear ſhall influence the Author to ſuppreſs his Zeal for the Service of his Country, however offenſive it may prove to Men whoſe Conduct or Pretenſions cannot abide the Teſt of an impartial Examination. He ſhall not ſit unconcerned amidſt publick Miſmanagement; nor be a ſilent Spectator of the general Calamity. Where the Rights of the Community are infringed, or violated, no Titles however auguſt, no Perſons however exalted, ſhall find a Shelter from the Treatment they deſerve; but he "will exert his Endeavours, at whatever Hazard, to "repel the Aggreſſor, to drag the Thief to Juſtice, whoever may protect them in "their Villainy, and whoever may partake of their Plunder."

PUBLIC Abuſes are, in their own Nature, progreſſive; and tho' eaſily removed in their Origin, acquire Strength by their Duration, and at laſt become too potent to be ſubdued. The Cockatrice is eaſily cruſhed in the Egg, but in full Growth, a formidable Enemy. A perfect Supineneſs under the leaſt Invaſion of civil or religious Liberty, is an Encouragement to greater, and preſages mightier Evils to come; while a ſeaſonable Oppoſition might not only have vanquiſhed the preſent, but diſcouraged all future Abuſes of the like Nature.

WHEN I have no Opportunity of ſerving my Country, by pointing out public Grievances, or propoſing beneficial Regulations, I ſhall take the Liberty to make Excurſions into the World of SCIENCE; confining my ſelf however to the moſt important Speculations, and ſuch as moſt nearly coincide with my principal Deſign of oppoſing Oppreſſion, and vindicating the *Liberty of Man*: But in Subjects meerly literary, I ſhall rarely indulge my ſelf.

THE Author will ever be open to Truth and Conviction; nor will any Perſon be more ready to detect his Errors, than he to correct them. But on the Slander and Scurrility of his Enemies, if ſuch it ſhould be his Misfortune to create, he will look down with a Sovereign Contempt.

IF after All, he ſhould fail of Succeſs, he will be ſure of the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience. Should his Speculations prove beneficial to his Country, ſufficient will be his Reward. But if he finds himſelf obliged to drop his Deſign, for Want of Encouragement; he will enjoy the inward Satisfaction of having, at leaſt, attempted to promote the public Welfare.

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